

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 060046

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XA, OAU, PO

SUBJECT: TALKS BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND AFRICANS

GENEVA FOR FERGUSON

REF: (A) ADDIS 3472; (B) STATE 056746 (BEING REPEATED)

(C) LISBON 1 105(BEING REPEATED) (D) GENEVA EXDIS 1428

1. IN REPLY TO SAHNOUN' S SPECIFIC QUESTION RE UN SYG
(PARA 9, REF C), FOLLOWING REPRESENTS VIEWS OF ASSISTANT
SECRETARY NEWSOM: QUOTE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT OR WHEN
TO INFORM UNSYG IS OF COURSE ONE FOR OAU TO DECIDE. HOW-
EVER, WE NOTE THAT SC RESOLUTION 322 SIMPLY REQUESTS SYG TO
" FOLLOW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SITUATION AND REPORT PERIODIC-
ALLY TO THE SC". THERE IS NO DEADLINE IN THIS REQUEST AND
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SYG HAS GIVEN US NO INDICATION HE IS ACTIVELY SEIZED OF MATTER. ALSO, IT HAS BEEN OUR IMPRESSION SINCE PASSAGE OF SC RESOLUTION 322 THAT PORTUGUESE HAVE SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT TALKING UNDER UN UMBRELLA. THUS, UNLESS THERE ARE FACTORS OF WHICH WE UNAWARE, WE DOUBT THERE IS " GRAVE RISK OF MISUNDERSTANDING OR OF GIVING APPEARANCE OF SLIGHTING SYG." MOREOVER, AS SAHNOUN OBSERVED, IF UN INFORMED NOW, LIKELIHOOD OF MAINTAINING SECRECY REMOTE -- A CONSIDERATION WHICH WOULD PRESUMABLY BE OVER- RIDING -- FOR BOTH SIDES. END QUOTE.

2. RE SAHNOUN' S OPINION THAT THERE IS SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN POSITION OF PORTUGUESE RE TALKING WITH OAU, WE NOTE THAT FOREIGN MINISTER PATRICIO REITERATED IN LISBON PRESS CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 21 THAT PORTUGUESE WILLING TO TALK WITH OAU.

3. RE SAHNOUN' S REMARK TO FERGUSON THAT LORD HOME CONVEYED " SIGNAL FROM PORTUGUESE", DEPARTMENT IS ANXIOUS TO ELIMINATE ANY IMPRESSION BY SAHNOUN OR OTHERS THAT NEWSOM GOT ANY " SIGNAL" FROM PORTUGUESE. NEWSOM WAS CONVEYING " IMPRESSIONS". MOREOVER, WE ARE NOT WILLING PLAY ROLE OF MIDDLEMAN BETWEEN OAU AND PORTUGUESE.

4. FOR LISBON: YOU MAY CONVEY TO PORTUGUESE WHEN YOU PROVIDE THEM WITH TEXT NEWSOM' S RESPONSE TO SAHNOUN THAT WE HAVE IMPRESSION SAHNOUN BELIEVES OAU WOULD BE PREPARED HOLD SECRET TALKS WITH PORTUGUESE, BUT WE DO NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD PLAY MIDDLEMAN ROLE THIS MATTER AND HAVE MADE NO FURTHER EXPLORATION SOF EXACTLY TYPE OR COMPOSITION TALKS SAHNOUN MAY HAVE IN MIND.

5. FOR LONDON: EMBASSY REQUESTED TO TRANSMIT NEWSOM' S REPLY TO SAHNOUN' S QUESTION IN PARA ONE ABOVE ORALLY TO SAHNOUN PRIOR HIS PLANNED DEPARTURE LONDON TUESDAY (SEE REF D). YOU SHOULD ALSO CONVEY VIEWS EXPRESSED PARA TWO AND THREE ABOVE. RUSH

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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